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THE
ELOQUENT

AND

Patriotic Speech

OF THE

Celebrated Irish Barrister,

MR. PHILLIPS,

AS SPOKEN BY HIM AT A PUBLIC DINNER

GIVEN BY

The Friends of Freedom

AND

ENEMIES TO CORRUPTION!

IN LIVERPOOL,

On Thursday the 31st. day of September, 1816,

As a Proof of their

Regard & Esteem

FOR THE MAN

Who has Courage enough to be Honest!

AND HONESTY ENOUGH

TO BE

Bold in the Cause of his Country!!

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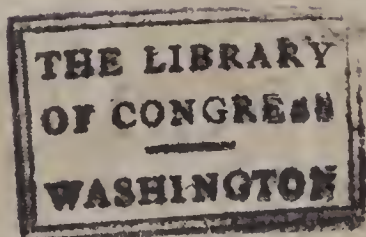
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Recd Oct 21, 1866

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Phillips's Speech.

BELIEVE me, Mr. Chairman, I feel too sensibly the high and unmerited compliment you have paid me, to attempt any other return than the simple expressions of my gratitude—to be just, I must be silent; but though the tongue is mute, my heart is much more than eloquent. The kindness of friendship—the testimony of any class, however humble, carries with it no trifling gratification—but stranger as I am, to be so distinguished in this great town, whose wealth is its least recommendation—the emporium of commerce, liberality, and public spirit—the birth-place of talent—the residence of integrity—the field where freedom seems to have rallied the last allies of her cause, as if, with the noble consciousness that though patriotism could not wreath the laurel round her brow, genius should at least raise it over her ashes—to be so distinguished, Sir, and in such a place, does, I confess, inspire me with a vanity which even a sense of my unimportance cannot entirely silence. Indeed, Sir, the ministerial critics of Liverpool were right. I have no claim to this enthusiastic welcome. But I cannot look upon this testimonial so much as a tribute to myself, as an omen to that country with whose fortunes the dearest sympathies of my soul are intertwined. Oh yes, I do foresee when she shall hear with what courtesy her most pretensionless advocate has been treated, how the same wind

that wafts her the intelligence, will revive that flame within her, which the blood of ages has not been able to extinguish. It may be a delusive hope, but I am glad to grasp at any phantom that flits across the solitude of that country's desolation. On this subject you can scarcely be ignorant, for you have an Irishman resident amongst you, whom I am proud to call my friend—whose fidelity to Ireland no absence can diminish—who has at once the honesty to be candid, and the talent to be convincing. I need scarcely say I allude to Mr. Casey—I knew, Sir, the statue was too striking to require a name upon the pedestal. Alas! Ireland has little now to console her, except the consciousness of having produced such men. It would be a treasonable adulation in me to deceive you. Six centuries of base misgovernment—of causeless, ruthless, and ungrateful persecution, have now reduced that country to a crisis, at which, I know not whether the friend of humanity has most cause to grieve or to rejoice; because I am not sure that the same feeling which prompts the tear at human sufferings ought not to triumph in that increased infliction which may at length tire them out at endurance. I trust in God a change of system may in time anticipate the results of desperation; but you may quite depend on it, a period is approaching when, if penalty does not pause in the pursuit, patience will turn short on the pursuer. Can you wonder at it?—Contemplate Ireland during any given period of England's rule, and what a picture does she exhibit!—Behold her created in all the prodigality of nature—with a soil that anticipates the husbandman's desires—with harbours courting the commerce of the world—with rivers capable of the most effec-

tive navigation, with the ore of every metal struggling through her surface—with a people brave, generous, and intellectual, literally forcing their way through the disabilities of their own country, into the highest stations of every other; and well rewarding the policy that promotes them, by achievements the most heroic, and allegiance without a blemish. How have the successive Governments of England demeaned themselves to a nation, offering such an accumulation of moral and political advantages! See it in the state of Ireland at this instant—in the universal bankruptcy that overwhelms her—in the loss of her trade—in the annihilation of her manufactures—in the deluge of her debt—in the divisions of her people—in all the loathsome operations of an odious, monopolising, hypocritical fanaticism on the one hand, wrestling with the untiring but natural reprisals of an irritated population on the other! It required no common ingenuity to reduce such a country to such a situation. But it has been done—man has conquered the beneficence of the Deity—his harpy touch has changed the viands to corruption, and that land, which you might have possessed in health, and wealth, and vigour, to support you in your hour of need, now writhes in the agonies of death, unable even to lift the shroud with which famine and fatuity try to encumber her convulsions. This is what I see a pensioned press denominates tranquillity. Oh, woe to the land threatened with such tranquillity—*solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*—it is not yet the tranquillity of solitude—it is not yet the tranquillity of death—but if you would know what it is, go forth in the silence of creation—when every wind is hushed, and every echo mute,

and all nature seems to listen in dumb, and terrified, and breathless expectation—go forth in such an hour, and see the terrible tranquillity by which you are surrounded! How could it be otherwise, when for ages upon ages, invention has fatigued itself with expedients for irritation; when, as I have read with horror in the progress of my legal studies, the homicide of a “mere Irishman” was considered justifiable, and when his ignorance was the origin of all his crimes, his education was prohibited *by Act of Parliament!*—when the people were worm-eaten by the odious vermin which a Church and State adultery had spawned—when a bad heart and brainless head, were the fangs by which every foreign adventurer and domestic traitor fastened upon office—when the property of the native was but an invitation to plunder, and his non-acquiescence the signal for confiscation—when religion itself was made the odious pretence for every persecution, and the fires of hell were alternately lighted with the cross, and quenched in the blood of its defenceless followers! I speak of times that are passed; but can their recollections—can ~~their~~ consequences be so readily eradicated?—Why, however, should I refer to periods that are distant? Behold, at this instant, five millions of her people disqualified on account of their faith—and that by a country professing freedom! and that under a Government calling itself Christian! You (when I say you, of course I mean, not the high-minded people of England, but the men who misgovern us both) seem to have taken out a roving commission in search of grievances abroad, whilst you overlook the calamities at your own door, and of your own infliction. You traverse the ocean to emancipate the African—you

cross the line to convert the Hindoo—you hurl your thunder against the savage Algerine—but, your own brethren at home, who speak the same tongue, acknowledge the same king, and kneel to the same God, cannot get one visit from *your itinerant humanity!* Oh, such a system is almost too abominable for a name—it is a monster of impiety, impolicy, ingratitude, and injustice! The pagan nations of antiquity scarcely acted on such barbarous principles. Look to ancient Rome, with her sword in one hand and her Constitution in the other, healing the injuries of conquest with the embrace of brotherhood, and wisely converting the captive into the citizen. Look to her great enemy, the glorious Carthaginian, at the foot of the Alps, ranging his prisoners round him, and by the politic option of captivity or arms, recruiting his legions with the very men whom he had literally conquered into gratitude! They laid their foundations deep in the human heart, and their success was proportionate to their policy. You complain of the violence of the Irish Catholic—can you wonder he is violent? It is the consequence of your own infliction—

“The flesh will quiver where the pincers tear,
The blood will follow where the knife is driven.”

Your friendship has been to him worse than hostility—he feels its embrace but by the pressure of his fetters. I am only amazed he is not much more violent. He fills your Exchequer, he fights your battles, he feeds your clergy, from whom he derives no benefit, he shares your burthens, he shares your perils, he shares every thing, except your privileges—*can you wonder he is violent?* He sees every pretended obstacle to his emancipation vanished—Catholic Europe your ally, the

Bourbon on the throne, the Emperor a captive, the Pope a friend; the aspersions on his faith disproved by his allegiance to you against, alternately, every Catholic Potentate in Christendom, and he feels himself branded with hereditary degradation—*can you wonder, then, that he is violent?*—He petitioned humbly—his tameness was construed into a proof of apathy. He petitioned boldly—his remonstrance was considered as an impudent audacity. He petitioned in peace—he was told it *was not the time*. He petitioned in war—he was told it *was not the time*. A strange interval—a prodigy in politics, a pause between peace and war, which appeared to be just made for him, arose—I allude to the period between the retreat of Louis and the restoration of Buonapart—he petitioned then, and he was told it was *not the time*. Oh, shame! shame! shame! I hope he will petition no more a Parliament so equivocating. However, I am sorry they did so equivocate, because, I think, they have suggested one common remedy for the grievances of both countries, and that remedy is, a REFORM OF THAT PARLIAMENT. Without that, I plainly see, there is no hope for Ireland—there is no salvation for England; they will act towards you as they have done towards us—they will admit your reasoning—they will admire your eloquence, and they will prove their sincerity by a strict perseverance in the impolicy you have exposed, and the profligacy you have deprecated. Look to England at this moment. To what a state have they not reduced her! Over this vast island, for whose wealth the winds of heaven seemed to blow, covered as she once was with the gorgeous mantle of successful agriculture, all studded over with the gems of art

and manufacture, there is now scarce an object but industry in rags, and patience in despair. The merchant without a ledger—the fields without a harvest—the shops without a customer—the Exchange deserted, and the Gazette crowded, form the heart-rending comments on that nefarious system, in support of which, Peers and contractors, stock-jobbers and sinecurists, in short, the whole trained, collated, pampered, and rapacious pack of ministerial beagles, have heen, for half a century, in the most clamorous and discordant uproar! During all this misery, how are the pilots of the State employed? Why, in feeding the bloated mammoth of sinecure—in weighing the farthings of some underling's salary—in preparing Ireland for a garrison, and England for a poor-house—in the structure of Chinese palaces, the decoration of dragoons, and the erection of public buildings. Oh! 'tis easily seen we have a saint in the Exchequer—he has studied scripture to some purpose—the famishing people cry out for *bread*, and the scriptural Minister gives them *stones*! Such has been the result of the blessed Pitt system, which, amidst oceans of blood, and 800 millions expenditure, has left you, after all your victories, a triumphant dupe—a trophied bankrupt. I have heard before of States ruined by the visitation of Providence, devastated by famine, wasted by fire, overcome by enemies; but never until now did I see a State, like England, impoverished by her spoils, and conquered by her successes! She has fought the fight of Europe—she has purchased all its *coinable blood*—she has subsidised all its dependencies in their own cause—she has conquered by sea—she has conquered by land—she has got peace, and of course, or the

Pitt apostles would not have made peace—she has got her “indemnity for the past, and security for the future;”—and here she is, after all her vanity and all her victories, surrounded by desolation, like one of the pyramids of Egypt, amid the grandeur of the desert, full of magnificence and death—at once a trophy and a tomb! The heart of any reflecting man must burn within him, when he thinks that the war, thus sanguinary in its operations, thus confessedly ruinous in its expenditure, was even still more odious in its principle. It was a war, avowedly undertaken for the purpose of forcing France out of her undoubted right of choosing her own Monarch; a war which uprooted the very foundations of the English Constitution—which libelled the most glorious era in our national annals—which declared tyranny eternal, and announced to the people, amid the thunder of artillery, that no matter how aggrieved, their only allowable attitude was that of supplication—which, when it told the French reformer of 1793 that his defeat was just, told the British reformer of 1688 his triumph was treason, and exhibited to history the terrific farce of a Prince of the House of Brunswick, the creature of the Revolution, OFFERING AN HUMAN HECATOMB UPON THE GRAVE OF JAMES THE SECOND!! What else have you done? You have succeeded, indeed, in dethroning Napoleon, and you have dethroned a Monarch, who, with all his imputed crimes and vices, shed a splendour around royalty, too powerful for the feeble vision of legitimacy even to bear. He had many faults; I do not seek to palliate them. He deserted his principles; I rejoice that he has suffered. But still let us be generous even in our enmities. How grand was his march! How mag-

nificent his destiny! Say what we will, Sir, he will be the land-mark of our times in the eye of posterity. The goal of other men's speed was his starting-post—crowns were his playthings—thrones his footstool—he strode from victory to victory—his path was “a plane of continued elevations.” Surpassing the boast of the too confident Roman, he but stamped upon the earth, and not only armed men, but States and Dynasties, and arts and sciences, all that mind could imagine or industry produce, started up, the creation of enchantment. He is fallen—as the late Mr. Whitbread said, “you made him, and he unmade himself,”—his own ambition was his glorious conqueror. He attempted, with a sublime audacity, to grasp the fires of heaven, and his heathen retribution has been the vulture of the rock! I do not ask what you have gained by it, because in place of gaining any thing, you are infinitely worse than when you commenced the contest. But what have you done for Europe? What have you achieved for man? Have morals been ameliorated? Has liberty been strengthened? Has any one improvement in politics or philosophy been produced? Let us see how. You have restored to Portugal a Prince of whom we know nothing, except that when his dominions were invaded, his people distracted, his crown in danger, and all that could interest the highest energies of man at issue, he left his cause to be combated by foreign bayonets, and fled with a dastard precipitation to the shameful security of a distant hemisphere! You have restored to Spain a wretch of even worse than proverbial princely ingratitude; who filled his dungeons, and fed his rack with the heroic remnant that had braved war, and famine, and massacre beneath his banners;

who rewarded patriotism with the prison—fidelity with the torture—heroism with the scaffold—and piety with the inquisition; whose royalty was published by the signature of his death-warrants, and whose religion evaporated *in the embroidering of petticoats for the blessed Virgin!* You have forced upon France a family to whom misfortune could not teach mercy, or experience wisdom; vindictive in prosperity—servile in defeat—timid in the field—vacillating in the Cabinet—suspicion amongst themselves—discontent amongst their followers—their memories tenacious but of the punishments they had provoked, their piety active but in subserviency to their priesthood, and their power passive but in the subjugation of their people! Such are the dynasties you have *conferred* on Europe. In the very act, that of enthroning three individuals of the same family, you have committed in politics a capital error; but Providence has countermined the ruin you were preparing, and whilst their impolicy prevents the chance, their impotency precludes the danger of a coalition. As to the rest of Europe, how has it been ameliorated? What solitary benefit have the “deliverers” conferred? They have partitioned the States of the feeble to feed the rapacity of the powerful; and after having alternately adored and deserted Napoleon, they have wreaked their vengeance on the noble but unfortunate fidelity that spurned their example! Do you want proofs—look to Saxony—look to Genoa—look to Norway—but, above all, to Poland! That speaking monument of regal murder and legitimate robbery!!!

Oh! bloodiest picture in the book of time—
Samartia fell—unwept—without a crime!

Here was an opportunity to recompense that brave, heroic, generous, martyred and devoted people—here was an opportunity to convince jacobinism that crowns and crimes were not, of course, co-existent, and that the highway rapacity of one generation might be atoned by the penitential retribution of another! Look to Italy: parcelled out of temporising Austria—the land of the muse, the historian, and the hero—the scene of every classic recollection—the sacred fane of antiquity, where the genius of the world weeps and worships, and the spirits of the past start into life at the inspiring pilgrimage of *some kindred Roscoe*. You do yourselves honour by this noble, this natural enthusiasm. Long may you enjoy the pleasure of possessing, never can you lose the pride of having produced the SCHOLAR, without pedantry—the PATRIOT, without reproach—the CHRISTIAN, without superstition—the MAN, without blemish! It is a subject I could dwell on with delight for ever. How painful our transition to the disgusting path of the deliverers. Look to Prussia, after fruitless toil and wreathless triumphs, mocked with the promise of a visionary constitution. Look to France, chained and plundered, weeping over the tomb of her hopes and her heroes. Look to England, eaten by the cancer of an incurable debt—exhausted by poors-rates—supporting a civil list of near a million and a half, annual amount—guarded by a standing army of 150,000 men—misrepresented by a House of Commons, ninety of whose Members, in places and pensions, derive 200,000*l.* in yearly emoluments from the Minister—mocked with a military peace, and girt with the fortifications of a war-establishment! Shades of heroic millions! these are

thy achievements!! MONSTER OF LEGITIMACY!!!
 —this is thy consummation! The past is out of our power; it is high time to provide against the future. Retrenchment and reform are now become not only expedient for our prosperity, but necessary to our very existence. Can any man of sense say that the present system should continue? What! When war and peace have alternately thrown every family in the empire into mourning and poverty, shall the fattened tax-gatherer extort the starving manufacturer's last shilling, to swell the unmerited and enormous sinecure of some wealthy pauper? Shall a borough-mongering faction convert what is mis-named the national representation, into a mere instrument for raising the supplies which are to gorge its own venality? Shall the mock dignitaries of Whiggism and Toryism, lead their hungry retainers to contest the profits of an alternate ascendancy over the prostrate interests of a too generous people? These are questions which I blush to ask—which I shudder to think must be either answered by the Parliament or the people! Let our rulers prudently avert the interrogation.—We live in times when the slightest remonstrance should command attention—when the minutest speck that merely dots the edge of the political horizon, may be the car of the approaching spirit of the storm! Oh! they are times whose omen no fancied security can avert; times of the most awful and portentous admonition. Establishments the most solid, thrones the most ancient, coalitions the most powerful, have crumbled before our eyes, and the creature of a moment, robed and crowned, and sceptered, raised his fairy creation on their ruins! The warning has been

given; may it not have been given in vain.

I feel, Sir, that the magnitude of the topics I have touched, and the imminency of the perils which seem to surround us, have led me far beyond the limits of a convivial meeting. I see I have my apology in your indulgence. But I cannot prevail on myself to trespass farther. Accept again, Gentlemen, my most grateful acknowledgments. Never, never can I forget this day: in private life, it shall be the companion of my solitude; and if in the caprices of that fortune which will at times degrade the high and dignify the humble, I should be hereafter called to any station of responsibility, I think I may at least fearlessly promise the friends who thus crowd around me, that no act of mine shall ever raise a blush at the recollection of their early encouragement. I hope, however, the benefit of this day will not be confined to the humble individual you have so honoured; I hope it will cheer on the young aspirants after virtuous fame in both our countries, by proving to them, that, however, for the moment envy or ignorance, or corruption, may depreciate them, there is reward in store for the man who thinks with integrity and acts with decision.—Gentlemen, you will add to the obligations you have already conferred, by delegating to me the honour of proposing to you the health of a man, whose virtues adorn, and whose talents powerfully advocate our cause; I mean the health of your worthy Chairman.

FINIS.

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